



The National Emerging Writer Programme

Have you always wanted to write a book?



CARLO GÉBLER



SINEAD MORIARTY



DECLAN HUGHES

Where Do Ideas Come From?

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Don't be daunted by the blank page or screen. Thousands of ideas are already floating around your head; 'lightbulb' moments when you have seen or heard something that has set off a spark in your imagination. Buy a notebook and dedicate it to your story ideas. Did you read a story in the newspaper that captured your imagination? Tear it out and stick it into your notebook. Did a song lyric create a spark in your imagination? Make a note of it.

Start viewing the world as a writer - focus on your surroundings. Make a positive effort to look around you as you go about your day. What does the garden smell like after heavy rain? What sounds do you hear as you put the cat out at night?

All writers are naturally curious. One of Ireland's best known authors, Maeve Binchy, was famous for people watching, for eavesdropping on conversations in coffee shops. As a writer, start to people watch. Listen to conversations in the queue in the supermarket, watch how people inter-relate. Ask yourself where the woman on the Dart is going, why is the man in the red car in such a hurry?

Keep your notebook beside you at all times and jot down anything that strikes you. **Start thinking in words and the ideas will come together to form story.** Try these exercises:

- Sit at a bus stop or train station and watch the people around you. Where are they going, what are they thinking? Let your imagination roam. Jot down your thoughts. Ask yourself, if these were characters in your novel, what would happen next?
- Cut out newspaper articles that catch your eye and pin them to a notice board or stick in a scrap book. Add photos of people or descriptions you have jotted down from your notebook. Create a storyboard. Write about it.
- Go for a walk and find two or three objects – perhaps a leaf, a stone, a tin can. Describe them in as much detail as possible.

Learn to listen to your creativity – find out what time of day you are most creative. Is it the morning or evening? Try and write during this time. And **don't be afraid to fail.** Failure is an integral part of creativity. It doesn't mean you're wrong, just that you've uncovered a path or technique that does not work. If you get stuck, go back to where your story was working and look for a new direction – did you take a wrong turn, did a character say something that was completely out of character?

Creativity is about letting your imagination roam free. And writing about it. The more you write, the better you will get.

To view The National Emerging Writer Programme online go to www.writing.ie.
The full DVD is available to borrow from your local library or to purchase from Amazon.